Synopsis for Proposed Research

Cosmopolitan Culture and Modern Womanhood in Select Novels of Bharati Mukherjee, Kavita Daswani and Swati Kaushal

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1. INTRODUCTION

Cosmopolitan is comparatively a new genre that is being used to be describe the books written for women. It explains in humorous tone the evolution of an urban heroine while she experiences usual life issues, such as love, marriage, dating, relationship, friendships, roommates, corporate environments, weight issues, addiction and many more. Cosmopolitan sprang up as a literary genre about two decades ago.The predecessors and most famous works are *SexandtheCity* (1996) by Candace Bushnelland *Bridget JonessDiary*(1997) byHenryFielding.In a broad sense,it is written by women authors,about contemporary women and for women readers .Consumerism (relative subjects including shopping ,fashion ,diet ,plastic surgery, luxurious wedding,etc.)and female identity are two major issues addressed in Chick Lit. The study to Cosmopolitan will be rewarding in terms of understanding contemporary women's opportunities,challenges and struggles in the modern era .Since its birth, Cosmopolitan has been embraced enthusiastically by the readers. However ,as a literary genre, it remains relatively unexplored by academics,especially in Chines academia.T he paper here intends to give a brief introduction to Chick Lit, focusing on its development, features,motifs and relevant research so a sto facilitate further study.

Broadlyspeaking,Cosmopolitanreferstoworksthatarewrittenbyyoungfemale writers,aboutcontemporarywomen'slifeandstruggles,withyoungwomenas ·the target readers. In theOxford English Dictionary, “Cosmopolitan” is defined as literatureby,for,oraboutwomenesp.atypeoffiction,typicallyfocusingonthe

sociallivesandrelationshipsofyoungprofessionalwomen,andoftenaimedat readerswith similarexperiences .

There are various definitions, positive as well as negative, available; but one point common to all such definitions is that they all agree that these are the stories which the liberated urban women of the post-feminist era want to read. The new woman can relate to the characters because as Laura Miller, the New York Times Book Review columnist says that nobody else is writing about the young women's working lives. The genre is actually contemporary with the movements like the Feminism and post- feminism. The famous Victorian novelist Jane Austen is considered to be the main inspiration as Helen Fielding tells that her Bridget Jones' Diary is the twenty-first century interpretation of Austen's Pride and Prejudice. Now moving towards the Indian Chick Lit, after getting enough attention in the western world, the genre is creating ripples in the literary scenario of India. The desi Cosmopolitanhas its own desi flavor with all the desi spices and ingredients added to the plot and the narrative. Sunaina Kumar, the leading columnist of the Indian Express addresses Indian cosmopolitan as Ladki-lit and states that ten years after the publication of Bridget Jones's Diary, the genre of fiction most recognizable for its pink cover art of stilettos, martini glasses and lipsticks, is now being colorfully infused with bindis, saris, and bangles. It is believed that the genre has been introduced to the young Indian girls with the publication of mainly two novels: Trust Me by Rajashree and Almost Single by Advaita Kala. And then there is seen a spurt of desi Cosmopolitanbooks.

The genre of cosmopolitanlargely features single women in their twenties and thirties navigating their generation challenges of balancing demanding careers while in search of satisfying personal relationships. The tone of this fiction is usually light and humorous. The genre includes mainly formulaic stories about women living in urban center with challenging careers often in publishing, marketing, television or journalism. It involves an internalization of basic liberal

feminist goals while simultaneously depoliticizing them. The personal thus becomes no longer political, but “inherently personal”. A concern to understand the dynamics of power and constraint gives way to celebratory connections between women who seemingly creates their own autonomous pleasures and rituals of enjoyable femininity. Chick lit, thus, draws from the language of empowerment, free choice and sexual liberation‟, yet aims to succeed in an aggressively consumerist culture. It is important to note here that this paper deals with the genre of Indian cosmopolitanand examines its possibilities as post feminist fiction.Indian chick-lit also has a couple of commonalities with diasporic literature. First, Indian chick-lit shows the hardships of living in a host country. Oftentimes, the host country’s society alienates the Indian protagonist since she looks foreign and has unfamiliar customs. Second, like characters in diasporic literature, the Indian heroine develops a hybrid identity; she assimilates to her host country and adopts some of its customs. Third, the Indian heroine in this sub-genre of chick-lit adapts to the host country through assimilation. When the Indian female character copies the host country’s people and its customs, she ultimately demonstrates that assimilation is futile because it does not help the heroine to achieve anything. And in some novels, Indian chick-lit shows that the concept of “home” is more difficult to define when the heroine returns to the homeland and discovers that she no longer belongs.

2. REVIEW OF INDIAN COSMOPOLITIAN

1. The novel “*Wife*” (1975) by Bharati Mukherjee. Bharati Mukherjee is a well-known Indo-American writer of recent decades. She depicts cross-cultural elements, female psyche and search for identity very skillfully in her novels.

“Desirable Daughters”, (2002) novel by Bharati Mukherjee, tells the story of three sisters as they find their very different paths in life. It uses autobiographical elements to explore the South Asian immigrant experience.In the novel, Bharati Mukherjee has struck a balance between tradition and

modernity by representing past and present which is achieved through the female protagonist -Tara, who severed her links with tradition but remains tied to her native country.

2 . **‘**For Matrimonial Purposes’ a novel by Kavita Daswani published in 2003, which represents The unconventional American desi heroine defies Indian tradition to find her own happy ending. Hilarious and heartwarming, For Matrimonial Purposes proves that while the search for love takes many forms, the heartbreak and exhilaration are universal. For Matrimonial Purposes is the hilarious story of Anju’s journey, her quest for love, and the choices that she must make while trying to remain true to herself and satisfy her family and tradition

“The Village Bride of Beverly Hills” is a novel written by Kavita Daswani published in 2006, who is a columnist forWomen’s Wear Daily The novel is based on a story of a Muslim Girl nameTanaya Shah; a young Indian girl mesmerized by western culture. She was raised by her mother and grandfather, as her father abandoned Tanaya's mother when Tanayawas a young child. Tanaya's grandfather treated Tanaya with the utmost respect. He treate her like his own daughter, but Tanaya still felt that she was neglected.

3**.** Swati Kaushal’s book “A girl like me’ published in 2008, is a story of young girl Anisha Rai or Ani and her journey of transformation from a stubborn, aimless, young to mature and understanding girl. The story of the novel tell us how this American born girl, faces problems of culture shock and education system difference and also other teenage problem. All in all, in this book is light read and can be easily related with a normal Indian teenager.

“ Piece of cake**”** is another best novel written by Swati Kaushal published in 2004, it is aboutMinal Sharma twenty nine years old a hyperactive conscience and a ton of attitude girl . Minal wants it all-a successful career at International Foods, a lifestyle to match, and a 'totally cool' guy who'll buy her diamonds, bring her flowers, and laugh at her jokes. The plot is about how she struggles in

her career and the choices of suitors and how her marketing project fails for which she is forced to take a blame and then a demotion to small time sales job. Eventually, she turns back that job into a success and also finds out the real person behind her project failure.

3.Objective

The purpose of study may be stated as follows -

- To point out the issues related to the various themes of selected Indian cosmopolitan writers with a special reference tin the selected novels of Bharti Mukharjee, Kavita Daswani ,Swati Kaushal.
- To compare the theme of the social lives and relationships of young professional women .
- To investigate the impact of overall development of women.
- To study the various characters and comment on the uniting thread and differences in all these novels.
- To study Indian cosmopolitan literature from cultural, social and political point of view.
- To study and draw inferences which may offer a fresh perspective to topics of the thesis

4. PrimarySources:- Basically the novels ofBhrati Mukherjee, Kavita Daswani andSwati Kaushalselected for the research work. They are as follows simultaneously

1) Wife 2)Desirable daughters

3 For Matrimonial Purposes 4)Salaam Paris

5) A girl like me 6)Piece of cake

5. Secondary Sources:-

The secondary sources would include Encyclopedia, Oxford Companion to English Literature, Cambridge Companion to Literature in English, Print works like news paper, articles on the author, dictionaries ,magazines etc. as well as

the data would be collected from journals, e-journals, internet, research articles, news papers, journals and essays etc.

Electronic works in the form of online resources, CD or DVD will be used for this research study

The present research work is descriptive and interpretative in nature. Primarily, the deep scrutiny of the selected novels would be made in general. Secondly all the themes in this novel will be understood and interpreted in detail, and the uniting threads that run through all these novels will be located.

6. Hypothesis

- Across the world in all cultures and traditions women are considered as inferior to men .
- Economic liberalization generated a new type of young Indian woman who is presented in these novels.
- Female protagonists try to explore their search for identify and also a huge similarity all her female protagonists.
- Literature is a medium which can be a force for making changes in individuals and societies about gender inequality.

7. Relevance

- Female writers have always been fully aware that their work was viewed as sub-standard and unimportant, but, instead of deterring them from writing, it seems to have made them all the more determined to succeed and make their voices heard.
- There is usually a personal, light, and humorous tone to the books...The plots usually consists of women experiencing usual life issues, such as love, marriage, dating, relationships, friendships, roommates, corporate environments, weight issues, addiction, and much more.
- The study focuses on women and their trials and tribulations, most notably in a humorous and light-hearted manner.

- This study considers cosmopolitanas a deeply contradictory genre of literature that generates highly polarized responses.
- By considering cosmopolitan both wide appeal to its readers and denunciation by literary critics as trivial fiction and exploring the positions taken up in academic and popular discussions about the genre.
- The study examine the questions cosmopolitanraises regarding literature, popular culture and contemporary socio-cultural realities of women.

8.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research work is the qualitative research. The qualitative research methods like implication , interpretation and critical analysis will be used for successful completion of research work. The research will use the descriptive method for the proposed study. The methodology will mostly include the library.

9. PROPOSED CHAPTER SCHEME:

Chapter I – Introduction

The present study is an endeavor to study the desi flavor of this foreign genre and itsrelation with the life of the contemporary independent and liberated Indian girls leading cosmopolitan lives and to showcase the relationship of this genre with Post-feminism. To explore in depth and support my argument I discuss two representative six books of this genre. This chapter will talk about the emerging of cosmopolitan literature. In the mid-2000s, a new woman began to appear on Indian bookshelves. The appearance of cosmopolitan coincided with or was made possible by the publishing boom in India in the mid-2000s. The first cosmopolitan novels featuring Indian protagonists came from Indian writers living abroad. This study will deals with themes of six novels "*Wife*" by Bharati Mukherjee" *For Matrimonial Purposes*" and "*Salam Paris*" by Kavita daswani ; as well as "*A girl like me"* and "*Piece of Cake"* by Swati Kaushal where the study will highlight the discursive

underpinnings of the subjectivity of the "singleton" – namely, being unmarried, upper-caste, Hindu and middle class.

(A)This chapter will talk about thecosmopolitan literature, features ofpost feminist approach, themes, contributions etc. There are also some female writers such asAdvaitakala,Zeenat Mahal.,PoonamSharma, Soniya Singh .

(B) In this section, focuses on the life, works and awards-achievements of above writers Moreover it will talks about the concept of the 'post feminist approach' that have dominated in the works of the author.

Chapter II – Post-Liberalization Romances.

(A)This chapter will talk about the chick lit and consumerism approach, themes, contributions etc. There are also some female writer.In this chapter, it is argued that The Village Bride of Beverly Hills, critiques the mainstream genre when it shows how chick-lit makes the articulation of a hybrid female identity problematic. When Indian chick-lit shows the pressures that the Indian heroine struggles with to be either part of U.S. culture, or to be fully Indian, the novel suggests that she cannot be both.This chapter intruding the female protagonist through the selected novels twenties and thirties and living in urban settings) and follows their love lives and struggles for professional success (often in the publishing, advertising, public reactions, fashion orfilm industry).

(B) In this section, focuses on the life, works and awards-achievements of KavitaDaswani .

Chapter III – Womanhood and Cosmopolitan Culture

(A)This is the basic theme of the Indian cosmopolitan novels Womanhood, today, is not only restricted to the conventionalities of home, tradition, and cultural divisions but has expanded to include earning capacity, employability, obsession with perfection, and of course, motherhood. There is an overload of qualifications, expectations, and choices for the modern women, which leads to the development of the female identity. Cosmopolitan heroines traverse between the conflicting demands of contemporary society and the conventional gendered

understanding of womanhood

(B) Apparently, a cosmopolitan cultural society can bring a huge array of benefits to a nation also, mainly in terms of cultural, political, economic, and social development.It describes chapter examines Indian female characters' struggles with their cultural identities in Bharati Mukherjee's The Tiger's Daughter and The Village Bride of Beverly Hills in order to show that Indian female protagonists experience similar conflicts, such as when they return home to India, in both Indian chick-lit and post-colonial literature that scholars critically explore. This chapter emphasizes the degree to which the heroines' alienation in the diaspora is doublesided

Chapter V – Feminine Beauty

(A) While looking one's best and having the best, is characteristic of Cosmopolitan heroines, it does not in any way mean that the novels deal with the superficial standards of physical beauty. The novels rather re-imagine beauty through the lens of real struggles and real desires of Cosmopolitan heroines. This makes women in Cosmopolitan not only immensely relatable but also very human. This chapter will comment on woman identity and various themes covered in this research work briefly. as reflected in the novels of selected novelists.

(B) In addition the social and cultural relevance the research work will be focused .This chapter focuses on the protagonist's assertion of singleness- being unmarried or unattached to a man- as an essential part of her identity and her ambivalence if not out right angst about this status. Through the selected Indian Cosmopolitan novels.

VI.Chapter- An Amalgamation of Traditions and Modernity:

Though these novels present a sharp contradiction to the stereotypical image of an Indian woman as they break many norms, yet they represent Indian beliefs and ethnicity. These are the girls in saaris and dupattas. They represent the

educated middle class girls of the twenty-first century India who want to make it big in their lives. They hail from small to middle sized cities. They are shown as newly urbanized that means they come from middle-sized towns and middle-class families to the big city to do something big in life. They want to have it all. They respect traditions and cultural norms, but certainly have a mind of their own. That is why they seems to be quirky sometimes with their own set of idiosyncrasies.

VII. Chapter- Conclusion

This chapter will comment on women identity and various themes covered in this research work briefly, as reflected in the novels of Bharti Mukharjee, Kavita Daswani and Swati Kaushal . The aim of this exploration is to highlight Indian cosmopolitan literary merits and to point out that it deserves post-colonial scholars' recognition. In addition the social and cultural relevance the research work will be focused.In the end, the aim of this exploration is to highlight Indian chick-lit's literary merits and to point out that it deserves post-colonial scholars' recognition. Indian chicklit is valuable because it is a cultural artifact; it is a genre that represents Indian female characters' issues like discovering love, being beautiful, and obtaining an ideal career in the twenty-first century.

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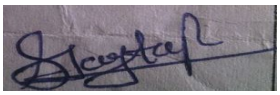

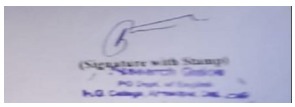

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